

APPROVED AS AMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

**TOWN OF DARIEN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 10, 2006**

ATTENDANCE: 1st Selectwoman Evonne Klein; Paul Hendrickson;
Linda Santarella; Barbara Thorne; Susan Young

STAFF: John Crary, Town Administrator

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Klein called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

The 1st Selectmen requested that the order of the agenda be changed and that item (b) be heard at this time.

**** MS. SANTARELLA MOVED TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE
AGENDA.**

**** MS. YOUNG SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b) Discussion with the Ad Hoc Committee on Affordable Housing - Charlotte Suhler

Ms. Charlotte Suhler, Chair, stated that in June the Committee was met with a surprise in that the Board of Finance denied their request for a Town survey and the hiring of a consultant. She reported the reason seemed to be that the Committee was not doing enough and they questioned that the educational aspect was second on their agenda. They also received some conflicting comments in that they were questioning that the full Board of Selectmen had not approved this Committee. Ms. Suhler then reviewed the charge of the Committee: to survey the Town for affordable housing needs; to establish an educational aspect for the Town about affordable housing; and to survey surrounding towns as to what they have done in respect to affordable housing. She stated that a survey cannot be done without professional assistance by someone in the field of housing, as well as someone with statistical background, to analyze the results. She stated that the Board of Finance seemed to suggest that a much larger Committee must be established, which in fact, would call for a Commission to be approved so she was not sure whether it was the Board of Finance or the Board of Selectmen that was tying their hands.

Ms. Suhler continued that as Chair she could not ask her Committee to continue to put in more of their volunteer hours if the results were not taken seriously and were not conclusive.

She stated that they were a non-partisan Committee working for the good of the Town and she would like the Board of Selectmen to get on board accordingly. She also asked that more members of the community, including attorneys with real estate and municipal expertise, be included as members and she felt that they were essential to the development of an affiliate housing plan for the Town. She stated that the Committee would like the Board of Selectmen to consider two options: to adjust the charge to be a small survey of the Town employees to assess their wants and needs for affordable housing, as well as non-resident employees of Darien businesses and Darien employers, and have a small budget; or reestablish this Ad Hoc Committee as a full fledged Commission to do a Town survey, lead an educational survey, and submit proposals for a plan of action for affordable housing in Darien.

Ms. Young stated that since their last discussion, they have been trying to figure this out as well and the Ad Hoc Committee was charged to prepare the way for an affordable housing Commission. She stated that the work the Committee has done had gotten them to this point and she believed that this was the time to do this and establish a Commission so that it does have full Board support. She stated that she, along with Ms. Santarella and Mr. Hendrickson, had put together some notes for doing this and she distributed a copy to the Board. Ms. Suhler asked if they had a meeting to discuss this and if so, that she should have attended. Ms. Young stated that no, they did not have a meeting, but they had been discussing it on the telephone about how they could move forward so that they had a sense of how this would work out because Allen O'Neill should be a part of the affordable housing plan. Ms. Klein stated that she was curious about why three of the Board members were meeting and she commented that they will discuss this issue later. She reported that Charlotte Suhler was before them with a proposal. Ms. Klein stated that neither she nor Ms. Thorne were included in any of this. Ms. Young replied that they were doing the homework necessary. Ms. Suhler stated that without the monetary backing for the survey and the consultant they could not go forward. She reported that they can pare down the survey or reestablish the Committee into a Commission. Ms. Klein stated that they should meet again because she and Ms. Thorne needed to catch up on this but she did contact the Housing Development fund for money and they are secure that they will get funding. They asked that they make an application to get funding to do a survey.

Ms. Santarella stated that when Ms. Suhler came forward and asked for the money they did not have a lot of information. She stated that she would like to receive some surveys to see what you get out of these surveys. She continued that when this was to be called an Ad Hoc Committee, they were waiting for a number of things to happen and then they were going to create a Commission. Ms. Thorne stated that they way to go was a

Commission and it was a good idea. She reported that the Ad Hoc Committee had done an enormous amount of work and what was in the report was just the tip of the iceberg.

Ms. Klein stated that this item will be put on the agenda for next week's meeting. She asked that Ms. Suhler forward her report to the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

FIRST SELECTWOMAN'S REPORT

DOT – TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Darien Rail Station- The Emergency Declaration was signed last week. Bob Steeger has attended meetings in Wethersfield and the DOT engineers have met here in Darien in preparation to make the electrical repairs. The scope of the work is extensive and should take care of the situation.

When the Governor issued her order to repair the Darien Rail Station, I called her and followed up with a packet of information which contained the history of the Town's communication with the CDOT on these issues. The Town has not received any formal communication from the Governor's Office to date, nor have we heard from the Rail Administrator's Office.

Noroton Heights Rail Station- The plans to repair the steps will be submitted to the DOT this week.

Route 1 Corridor Study – The contract remains in the Contracts Department. This was scheduled to be signed and dispersed in November due to personnel shortages this contract has not been executed.

Route 106 ROW- Bob Steeger and I met with representatives from Metro North and the DOT as a follow up to the complaints received from neighbors as to the quality of maintenance in this area. Concerns and options for improvements have been forwarded to the highway division of the DOT for review and to develop a plan of action.

Traffic- A resident of Goodwives River Rd collected signatures for a petition to stop the test driving of cars along the Goodwives River and Long Neck Point Rd neighborhoods. I presented that to the Police Commissioner's last month.

Value Pricing Proposal- The state is in the middle of their review and we should hear something by the end of this month.

MPO- I will be working with First Selectmen Woody Bliss and Jim Lash on the legislative agenda.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Preparations are underway to hold a town-wide Emergency Preparedness Week in September. The Red Cross, United Way, various organizations in Town, as well as the Town, are scheduling events and opportunities for residents to learn more about

preparedness for all types of situations. Included in this week will be another community meeting on Pandemic and Avian Flu. Our goal is to distribute the Preparedness Guides to all Darien residents during this week.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AD HOC COMMITTEE SURVEY FUNDING

As Board of Selectman members are aware, the Board of Finance did not approve our request for \$7,000 to partially fund a survey of town residents on affordable housing to use as data on which to build an affordable housing plan for the Town of Darien. I contacted the Housing Development Fund to investigate funding this project. I am pleased to report that they are in the middle of putting the final touches on a technical assistance grant and we will have the opportunity to apply for a grant thru the HDF. Their grant is due on 24 July.

DRI

Painted the lines for the parking spaces on Tokeneke Road this weekend.

MUNICIPAL AGENT FOR THE ELDERLY

Judy Morrison has been our municipal agent for the past several years. She has accepted a 2-year re-appointment as our agent. I reviewed the Annual Report and the most requested services by the elderly in Southwestern Fairfield County are:

1. Tax rebate
2. Energy assistance
3. Housing
4. ConnPACE
5. Food pantry

STEAP GRANTS 2006/2007

I followed up on the information regarding the additional funds available to municipalities through STEAP. In the 2005/2006 fiscal year STEAP received \$40M in applications and had only \$20M in funding available. The Town of Darien received \$85,000 to improve signage in the downtown. What STEAP is offering to municipalities is to roll over their applications, rather than refuse them or make municipalities wait until May. They will review the applications and make award decisions in September. We have the opportunity to make an application once again. Residents of senior housing approached me about their areas of concern. I have a list of items for repair that are safety issues and would recommend to the Board of Selectmen to pursue this funding opportunity.

DARIEN DAYS

Last week was a busy week in Town with the Push Pull Parade, Sidewalk Sales and the carnival. I would like to thank all who worked hard to make these events great fun for all who attended.

BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

The 1st Selectwoman read a letter to the Editor in the Norwalk newspaper that

complimented the appearance of the Darien downtown hanging baskets on the light posts.

Ms. Klein stated that she wanted to follow-up on housekeeping concerns and the concern of the “appearance” that the majority of the Board does not work together. She reported that she prefers that the Board not call around to other Board Members. Ms. Santarella stated that she was making a fuss about this and there was a notion out there that the Board was not moving forward. She stated that the Board had different ideas that were thrown together and she thought it was a positive step. Ms. Klein stated that she was talking about appearances and it was important to keep that in mind. She continued that Board business is best discussed as a group of five and in public. Ms. Santarella stated that she totally disagreed and that Ms. Klein was making an issue of it. She said she thought it was a good thing that they communicate. Ms. Klein stated that all Board Members should hear the same thing at the same time.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER’S REPORT

Mr. Crary reported that they were getting closer to having cable TV at the Board meetings. He stated that the cameras were up and the sound system was underway. He also reported that next week he and Jeremy Ginsberg will be meeting with a GIS conversion consultant to convert from one software package to another. He stated that the conversion was approved in the budget. The new software package is called ArcView. Mr. Crary also reported that tomorrow he and the 1st Selectwoman will be going to Norwalk to participate in a Table Top Emergency session.

Ms. Young commented that the report on parking was very well done. Mr. Crary replied that the study was performed by a teenage intern.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Presentation on Weed Beach Master Plan

Sue Swiatek, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, stated they overtook a plan a year ago. She reported that a survey was taken of what residents wanted to see and a site survey was made that encompassed 22 acres. She reported that Sterns & Wheeler, LLC and Von Ohlsen Design Associates were selected as the architect and design firms.

Ms. Diane Halston, of Sterns and Wheeler, then gave a presentation on 21 items that made up the master plan. She reported that the vision of the master plan was to offer a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities, preserve and enhance views and access to the waterfront, preserve and enhance natural resources, provide an attractive and welcoming feeling, and update amenities

for all users. She stated that the Guard House will be moved forward to the front of the area, the asphalt in the parking area will be reduced considerably with 183 of the 208 parking spaces on asphalt. She also reviewed changes to the children's playground, nature trails, picnic area, bathhouse, boardwalk, and plantings. Ms. Swiatek distributed a copy of cost estimates to the Board. She reported that there were opportunities for partnerships and fundraising. She noted that the significant change will be to the parking and the reduction of asphalt and that they heard from the public that this is what they wanted to see.

Ms. Klein asked if there were a timeline noting that there were coastal grants available. She also stated that with the CL&P cable project was coming up and it will create holes in the road. Ms. Swiatek stated that the parking was the biggest piece to get done. Ms. Klein stated that the coastline is Darien's most valuable asset and this was not scheduled to be voted on this evening, however it will be on the agenda of next week's meeting for a vote. Mr. Dan Dolcetti stated that this was fantastic and he asked if there was any concept for a pool. Ms. Swiatek stated that this was going to be left as a beach. Ms. Debbie Parnon commended Sue Swiatek and her staff on the work they performed on this project.

c) Discussion on meeting with Planning & Zoning and parking regulations.

The Board reviewed the draft of the Parking Regulations request. Ms. Klein asked if there were any comments or changes to it. She stated that it was based on a research of studies. Ms. Santarella asked if a Task Force rather than a Committee should be appointed. Ms. Young asked that they add commuters as part of the process. Ms. Santarella asked if there was a conflict with Planning and Zoning being on this. Ms. Klein stated that there should be a buy-in, weaving the Board of Selectmen's role as the Parking Authority into P&Z territory. Ms. Young stated that it was a mutual concern. Mr. Hendrickson agreed that it was a joint effort. Mr. Crary stated that on-street parking was under the jurisdiction of the Police Department and a member from the PD should be added to the Committee.

Ms. Klein stated that they were all in agreement that the parking regulations had to be changed and they will work on the goal and develop the process. Ms. Santarella stated that they already had a lot of information but how do they put it together. Ms. Young asked how many people would be on the Committee and Ms. Klein replied between 7 to 9. The Board agreed that she will present Option A at the Planning &

Zoning meeting tomorrow night and she will make the changes to add commuters and the Darien Police Department to the Committee. Ms. Klein stated that only the Planning & Zoning Commission could vote on these regulations.

d) Discuss and Take Action on the approval of the Darien Road Race for September 10, 2006

Ms. Santarella asked if they had a plan in place with the Police Department to monitor the race. Mr. Crary stated that it was not approved yet but they could approved this contingent upon a plan.

- ** MS. SANTARELLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE DARIEN ROAD RACE FOR SEPTEMBER 10, 2006.**
- ** MS. THORNE SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

e) Discuss and Take Action on accepting a gift of \$7,625 from the VFW for the Veterans Memorial at Town Hall

- ** MS. YOUNG MOVED TO ACCEPT A GIFT OF \$7,625 FROM THE VFW FOR THE VETERANS MEMORIAL AT TOWN HALL.**
- ** MR. HENDRICKSON SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

f) Discuss Beautification Committee memo re: sign regulation

Ms. Klein reported that Planning & Zoning was in the process or had changed the sign regulations to make them less stringent. She stated that when there are sign regulation changes, the P&Z Director should notify the realtors and she did not think they needed a letter from her. She stated that it was P&Z's responsibility. Ms. Santarella agreed that is was not the Board of Selectmen's responsibility.

Bob Baker, John Scholkenhoffen and Janet Sargent, of the Beautification Commission, were present. Mr. Scholkenhoffen stated that the Commission donates a lot of time and it bugs him that the signs along the streets ruin the area. He stated that it was important to have the ordinance enforced and they were hugely exposed in terms of enforcement.

g) Noroton Fire Department request to waive building permit fee

Ms. Klein reported that Mike Vitti asked the Board to consider waiving the \$7,500 building permit fee for the Fire Department. Ms. Young asked if this was done previously. Mr. Crary reported that Town Counsel said it was a policy decision. Ms. Santarella stated that if they did this, it would set a policy. She reported that there was \$41,000 in the Fire Department's account and asked if the Fire Department was willing to help out other departments.

- ** MR. HENDRICKSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE REQUEST FROM THE NOROTON FIRE DEPARTMENT TO WAIVE THE BUILDING PERMIT FEE.**
- ** MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.**

h) Discuss and Take Action on request of the Flower Nook to sell flowers at the Darien Train Station

Ms. Klein stated that she had spoken with Bob Steeger and, in the past, requests like this were denied.

i) Transfers:

1. Parks and Recreation

Internal transfer of \$2,950 to cover emergency repairs to irrigation system at McGuane Park, increase cost to clean public bathrooms at the Darien Nature Center and increased costs for motor fuel. Please see attached transfer sheet.

Mr. Cray stated that the transfer between accounts was to cover facility repairs at McGuane Park and the increase in the cost of gasoline.

**** MR. HENDRICKSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING
TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS TO THE BOARD OF
FINANCE:**

FROM:			TO:		
ACCT. NO.	ACCOUNT	AMOUNT	ACCT. NO.	ACCOUNT	AMOUNT
10605001-83024	Facility Maint. Mat'l	\$ 950	10605001-82041	Facility Repairs	\$ 950
10603001-82040	Motor Equip Repair	2,000	10603001-83004	Motorized Fuel	2,000
	TOTAL	\$ 2,950		TOTAL	\$2,950

**** MS. THORNE SECONDED.
** MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. Seniors

Internal transfer of \$4,726 to cover the increased cost of fuel oil and electricity at the Senior Center. Please see attached transfer sheet.

Mr. Cray reported that the transfer was to cover the increased cost of heating oil and electricity for the Senior Center.

**** MS. THORNE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING
TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS TO THE BOARD OF
FINANCE:**

FROM:			TO:		
ACCT. NO.	ACCOUNT	AMOUNT	ACCT. NO.	ACCOUNT	AMOUNT
1050220182033	program	\$1,676	1050220182051	Electricity	\$1,676
1050220182033	program	1,419	1050220183005	Heating fuel	1,419
1050220182008	printing	1,400	1050220183005	Heating fuel	1,400
1050220182053	water	2,000	1050220183005	Heating Fuel	42
1050220182050	telecoms	189	1050220183005	Heating Fuel	189
TOTAL		\$4,726	TOTAL		\$4,726

** MS. SANTARELLA SECONDED.
 ** MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

AGENDA REVIEW

The Board discussed the agenda for the next meeting. They agreed that it should include the DRI gift, the Commission on Affordable Housing charge, debt service, 6 year review of capital projects, budget review, a vote on parking permits, and a vote on Weed Beach Master Plan. Ms. Klein reported that the Health Department was coming to the meeting to discuss improvement of services. It was discussed that Charter Revision should be on the agenda for August.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Regular Meeting of June 19, 2006

The following change was made to the minutes:

Pg.11: Motion: Change spelling to Mr. Hendrickson.

** MS. SANTARELLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE
 MEETING OF JUNE 19, 2006 AS AMENDED.
 ** MS. THORNE SECONDED.
 ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Board of Selectmen
 Regular Meeting**

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- July 11, 2006 Planning & Zoning General Meeting at 8:00 p.m.
- July 17, 2006 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting at 7:00 pm
- July 18, 2006 Board of Finance Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- July 19, 2006 Parks & Recreation Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- August 7, 2006 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting at 7:00 pm

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OTHER BUSINESS

(A two-thirds majority vote is required to add an item to the agenda)

Mr. Crary requested that an item be added to the agenda to go into Executive Session to discuss pay raises for department heads.

- ** MS. SANTARELLA MOVED TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:00 PM.**
- ** MS. YOUNG SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna DeVito
Telesco Secretarial Services